COMMUNITY RELIGION

AND THE

DENOMINATIONAL HERITAGE

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COMMUNITY RELIGION
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by

J. R. HARGREAVES
AND OTHERS

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PREFACE

THIS book has emerged in response to a demand which has been expressed by the Christian leaders of many small communities. Repeatedly the inquiry has been voiced for some thoughtful interpretation of the essential contribution of each of the denominations now cooperating and seeking to form local united churches. There has been held in view also the fact that such an interpretation of principles would render a special service in the interests of the Five Year Program of Survey and Adjustment of the Home Missions Council and associated bodies. The writers have been invited, as men who could speak with the authority of knowledge and with appreciation of the object for which the book is designed. They have had in mind to present the living elements of their several historical traditions, so that the reader who wishes to become acquainted with these may do so as readily as possible, and thus learn what he may expect to receive, as well as to contribute, in a unified church. While the effort to meet the needs of the small community has been held primary, it is hoped that the book will also prove of service to many interested in a more general way in the problems that confront our divided Protestant Christianity.

J. R. HARGREAVES.

COMMUNITY RELIGION
AND THE
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Chapter I

UNITY METHODS IN OVERCHURCHED COMMUNITIES

J. Robert Hargreaves
Field Secretary, Home Missions Council

The Community Religious Movement, as it is known today, arose simultaneously in different places. It is an expression of a desire to better adapt religious organization to community needs. One of the marked accomplishments of the church is manifest in the bringing to the level of a fine art the simple matter of living together as members of the same district. We have come to appreciate the basis of Jesus' great aspiration that "they all may be one." The petition was inspired by the understanding that the unit in society is not the individual, but the group. For some time the rural and suburban communities have been experiencing a growing consciousness of the handicap arising from the divided condition in their religious organizations — divisions which are the result of some of those holy protests of our fathers which resulted in the segregation of Protestant people into different denominations. They are finding that the forces which should be bringing the Day of the Lord are, by a mistaken zeal for the protection of certain points of emphasis, violating the very fundamental principles which Jesus set forth, and on which community well-being is dependent. To overcome this difficulty without disloyalty to the great principles and interests inherent in the different groups is the task of the Community Religious Movement, and an effort in which the writers of this book seek to render constructive aid.

One of the very splendid though simple discoveries in the sphere of organized religion is that distinctive principles do not necessarily conflict. They arise out of life experiences, and in many cases are complementary. In church union efforts it is a mistake to think that we must avoid the mention of denominational positions. We should know them and magnify the opportunity of emphasizing their value in coördination. To minimize our distinctive emphases in the interest of external union would be to nullify the possible splendid results of the unity movement.

In many of the larger churches, on account of their superior opportunities and wider outlook, those great findings, which for a time were nourished within the sectarian groups, have become the general possession and have been woven into a composite vision, while, on the other hand, country churches, on account of the limitations incident to the struggle for existence, are losing sight of the principles for which the fathers stood and are continuing a name only. I have found many young people who did not know the first thing about the origin of the churches in which they were supposed to be receiving their religious instruction. Our rising generation cannot afford to lose those great elements of faith which are the products of the life experiences of the past. It will be one of the requirements of our present effort for the benefit of village church organization to regain in unison that which has been lost or neglected in the divided state. An appreciation of these principles is going to be hastened as we are afforded the opportunity to look at them in the aggregate rather than separately, to compare rather than to contrast them. Like the different colors in a picture in which one tint glorifies another, so the great doctrines and beloved concepts which mark the progress of Christianity through the ages will be seen to stand out grander and plainer in combination than in separation.

In issuing this book it is the hope that village congregations, and others contemplating union, after studying each chapter and thus gaining familiarity with the heritage which the respective churches have cherished, may, with renewed appreciation of their respective points of emphasis, bring them as newly polished stones to a common altar. We also hope that, after this study, each group may be prepared to receive the contribution which the others bring, that with the cement of mutual confidence and appreciation the cherished ideas and customs may be wrought into one harmonious structure. As we sympathetically examine one another's history, purposes, and principles, we may expect to find in each the variant expression of the things we individually cherish. By thus viewing great truths and resulting purposes from different angles we will further illumine our own pathway. We will find that, in large degree, the different elements we discover can be made to fit together as though originally shaped by the hands of a master awaiting only the spirit of the people to build them into one body of faith and worship.

The building of Solomon's Temple was consummated without the sound of any tool, though there may have been considerable noise back in the quarries from which the stones came. There has been a good deal of noise over the question of church union, and perhaps it was necessary, but the real united church must be attained in the peaceful atmosphere of human confidence. The processes will be so simple that a child can follow them, so simple that the spirit of a child will be necessary thereto. We will gain Christian unity as we learn to trust one another and come to think as sympathetically of others' traditions and values as we would have others think of ours. To do this sincerely and intelligently we should learn a little of one another's history and feelings.

A united church for worship and service does not necessitate a singleness of idea nor yet a uniformity of ceremonial expression. In that famous effort led by Dr. Oberlin in France he carried a wafer for the Catholics, unleavened bread for the Lutherans, and leavened bread for the Calvinists, and was able to be the one minister in the wide region of the Vosges. And what a ministry it was! By living and working together roads were built, schools were established, social life was purified, and God was worshiped even though the mediums of personal expression differed a little. Why bid the Spirit of Christ to await the forming of a single creed and a uniform ceremonial?

The United Church Sanctuary will have in its appointments the baptistry for those who wish to express, through immersion, the thought of renunciation, the font for those who desire, by the ceremony of sprinkled water, to typify cleansing, and the altar for those who will be thereby aided in their thought of the actual divine presence. The church, in its ceremonial, will be concerned only with making provision for everyone to hear and to express himself in the soul language wherein he or she was born. For many worshipers, the value of any custom or ordinance is not in the inherent content of the particular act, but in the subjective impression through the soul language which some certain custom offers. For others, the customs which they revere have the sanction of divine authority, and their fellow-worshipers will respect that position.

The United Church will have regard primarily for the need of the heart sincerely and feelingly to express its devotion rather than for a conformity to any particular method of such expression; and the real community minister will be devoted to the task of furnishing his people with the opportunity to carry out their acts of worship in a way which is meaningful to them. It is possible that, as the days go by and the church continues to practice mutual regard, that it will develop a sufficient degree of uniformity to insure the continuity and congeniality of its fellowship and the efficiency of its service. In a church so constituted no significant truth will permanently be lost for lack of embodiment in a separate ecclesiastical organization. The different individuals and groups in the united congregation will give to the historic principles and controlling purposes of the different denominations that degree of emphasis which they merit.

The Community Church Movement, in its differing forms of expression, has been of recent origin, and has proceeded, very largely, through the voluntary assistance which one locality has lent to another, plus the interest of volunteer leaders. Books have been written indicating the need, and also the various forms which adjustments have taken. It is only recently that it has come to be regarded as a movement within the denominations seeking to adjust church organization to the needs of the hour and to the attainments of the christian efforts of the past. One great objective of the church has been to reach a community spirit of good will and mutual helpfulness. Through this effort it has finally developed an active devotion to the art of living together. People in small places are ceasing to speak disparagingly of their community assets and are forming organizations to take advantage of one another's society and talents. In so doing they are finding that the elements of a perfectly ordered society can be found in the few hundred living in an average rural or suburban locality. It has been the teaching of social laws through religion which has brought about this age of coöperation, and now, through the Community Religious Movement, the church is seeking to rise to the level of its own principles.

Although the movement has been growing in favor as it has come to be better understood, up to date there has been little regularity in the methods of approach. Villagers have been told that they could adjust their over-churched or unfortunately churched conditions in one of four or five ways. The possibility of the Independent Church, the Federated Church, the Associated Churches, the Denominational Community Church and the Larger Parish System has already been presented, with the result that confusion of feeling rather than clarified impression has followed. We have been more concerned with getting away from the disadvantages of the purely sectarian system than with constructive and comprehensive effort towards the attainment of the new vision. We have now started to seek the coöperation of those who are disposed to unity, and are coming more and more to recognize the advantages of a unified method of approach.

In the past, we have put our emphasis upon the negative side of the matter and have been too nearly content with a protest against our divisions. Now we are beginning to see the need of a definitely practicable program for the village church and are trying to discover what are the conditions which need to be corrected. In this new effort we are saying less in mere criticism of division and giving more attention to the preservation, in the new order, of those values which have been accumulated during the life of the order from which we are emerging.

Within little more than a year previous to the time in which we are writing, the Home

Missions Council, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and the Community Church Workers have arranged for united effort in rural survey and adjustment. From the three councils a joint committee has been formed whose duties are as follows:

1. To study, in coöperation with the Five-year Program Committee of the Home Missions Council, the spiritual interest of individuals and communities with special reference to the question,—how can the churches, present and future, so work together as to produce the best spiritual results without competition and overlapping of effort.

2. To follow up such recommendations, by whatever means may seem wise, to realize the ideal of greater unity and effectiveness among the churches.

The value of this coördination of effort on the part of the administration of the three councils is very great. It illustrates unity and conveys to the minds of the many, who may not be familiar with the particular task of each council, a sense of interchurch concern in the need for church adjustment. Such an arrangement presents the idea of a united front on the part of the present order, thus creating that confidence which opens ways of approach.

In carrying out the plans that have been entered into, we are looking for and encouraging mergers in over-churched communities. We are seeking recognition of some uniform method of approach which, while fostering the development of a single church consciousness, will at the same time permit the retaining of such relations and items of value as are necessary to present interests. We are seeking the restoration of a body of truths, gleaned out of the life experiences of the past, which will be a guide to those seeking the best way of life. We are endeavoring to formulate a technique of worship through which people, accustomed to different ceremonials and service orders may continue to receive the desired satisfaction of soul. (In the Appendix to this volume the reader will note the four principles which are being proposed as points to guide in the making of adjustments and a sample constitution based thereon.)

Concerning the formulation of a United Church in villages and suburbs one question is constantly asked, or raised, as a criticism of the effort—will not the organization thus formed develop into another denomination? In answer to that question and criticism the attention of the reader is called to an outstanding feature of the following chapters. It will be noticed that, in the rise of the different denominations described, there is an element of protest. Either the group has protested against some abuse on the part of the government or against something considered irregular or insufficient in ecclesiastical practice. Speaking generally, denominations have arisen out of protests, and, in the early stages, have developed in the spirit of protest. Our present effort is something very different. The Community Religious Movement is not a protest against denominations, but an evolution within the present needs. Instead of being a protest against something it is proceeding as an expression of faith and mutual appreciation. In it we are applying the art of living together. Our principles governing coördination are based on the desire to contribute those elements which we have considered of great value, and at the same time receive from others something which will enlarge our own vision. May it not be that, animated by such principles, the Community Church Movement will lead the way to the escape of Protestantism from a divided to a unified state?

Chapter II

BAPTIST PRINCIPLES AND COMMUNITY RELIGION

Robert A. Ashworth
Editor of The Baptist

It does not seem to be easy for Baptists to unite with members of other communions within the fellowship of a single church. They are not included in the United Church of Canada. They commonly look askance at conferences on Christian unity, particularly if they suspect these to be headed in the direction of an all-inclusive church organization. Various Baptist bodies, in this country and abroad, have been known to refuse to appoint delegates to participate in such discussions.

The reasons for such an attitude are not far to seek. In the first place, the ideal of catholicity, or universality, makes, in general, no strong appeal to Baptists. They have never made any claim to be more than a denomination: they have never claimed to be the Church, or the true Church. They were consciously "come-outers," dissenters among Protestants, even in the Reformation days in which they took their rise. It should be remembered that they were not the product of the Protestant Reformation of continental Europe, though greatly indebted to it, but that primarily they derive from the Anabaptists, who developed their genius side by side with the reformers, but in large part independently of them. And the Anabaptists were religious radicals, carrying the Protestant principles farther than the reformers were willing to go, and, therefore, long the object of distrust. It has always been difficult for Baptists to conform. From the Anabaptists they drew a tradition of the free life of the spirit, of the exaltation of the inward light, of independence of form and ceremony, of social passion and democracy, freedom of conscience, and the demand for the separation of church and state—a tradition most of the elements of which encourage a pronounced individualism.

Again, Baptists have always regarded themselves as occupying an attitude of protest against what they conceive to be departure from exact and literal obedience to the New Testament. Thus, in the desire to reproduce the original pattern to be found there, they have insisted upon the necessity of a regenerated church membership, and this has been the source of their opposition to infant baptism. While Baptists, on what they believe to be scriptural grounds, are an immersionist body, it is well known that the mode of baptism was not thought to be of the essence at the first; but insistence upon a regenerated church membership has always been thought essential. Holding tenaciously to the spiritual competence of the soul, Baptists assert the privilege, the ability, and the obligation of every individual to seek God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, for himself, and have held that the mediation of any man or any institution whatsoever is unnecessary. A man's relation to God and to the church may and must be determined by himself. They practise, therefore, believer's baptism only. This departure from common Christian usage appeared for generations to make of Baptists a separate people, and they have acquiesced in the status assigned to them.

The logical consequences of their principles, moreover, have seemed to remove the Baptists farther from the Catholic tradition than has been the case with most other Protestant bodies. They believe that religion is a purely spiritual experience, and that neither its inception nor its maintenance can possibly be dependent upon any external or physical act. The efficacy of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, in their view, does not depend upon the the official position of him who administers them, but only upon the presence of the Lord and the faith of him who receives them. Men are saved by faith alone. The ordinances are related to faith as aids and reminders. Nothing is conveyed or effected by the ordinances in and of themselves. Each is a symbol, nourishing in the believer and keeping before his mind essential elements in a Christian experience, but not a part of that experience, much less producing it. The ordinances can serve to fortify the life of the spirit only as by the stimulation of faith they may quicken man's spiritual-rational nature. In this sense only they are means of grace.

It follows that, in their belief, no special order of the ministry with priestly functions is essential to introduce men to God or God to man. Affirming the priesthood of all believers, all members of the church are equal in spiritual privilege, authority, and station. There is, indeed, no special order of the ministry, though those who believe themselves to be called of God to preach the gospel may, if approved by their brethren in orderly fashion, be set apart, according to the New Testament practice, for this special work.

The fact that Baptists acknowledge no credal formula as authoritative, and that, receiving the New Testament as the only rule of faith and practice, they accord, in theory at least, full liberty of individual interpretation, provides abundant opportunity for divergencies of view within their fellowship. That there should prevail under such conditions so large a measure of agreement in doctrine as actually exists is quite remarkable.

It may readily be seen, therefore, why Baptists sometimes find it more difficult than do some other communions to unite with those who do not see eye to eye with them within a single church fellowship. Many of the principles to which Baptists have historically held, and for which, on occasion, they have suffered persecution, have been the possession also, or have become the possession, of other Christian bodies or of the Church at large. It is easily credible, also, that other Christian bodies conserve by other means some of the spiritual values for which Baptists contend. Nevertheless, Baptists in general feel that such principles as are still distinctive of them are of such spiritual consequence that, in the interest of the churches as a whole, and of religion itself, they must continue their witness until these are generally accepted, and they fear lest in any merger of any kind these, to them precious, spiritual treasures may be forgotten or lost. Baptists find little difficulty in coöperating with other bodies in Christian tasks, as in city federations and in the Federal Council, of which the Baptists of the North have been members since its beginning. But they are likely to look with some hesitation at any form of union which threatens to submerge the principles of which they believe themselves to be stewards.

Now, if, borrowing the method of the psycho-analyst, we have been able to uncover the roots, historical and theological, of our phobias and anxieties, it may help us to estimate them fairly and, so far as may be desirable, to dispossess ourselves of them.

With these convictions, and this sense of responsibility for them, Baptists, in these days, have come face to face with an actual and practical situation which they cannot contemplate without disquietude. It is "a condition and not a theory" that confronts them, as Mr. Cleveland once put it. They see communities over-churched, where the multiplication of organizations beyond the need of the population or its ability to sustain them actually hinders the progress of the kingdom of God, and they see communities unchurched, whose people are in part or altogether denied the ministry of religion. To the un-Christian implications and consequences of some of these conditions the conscience of Christendom has only lately awaked. Not to dwell upon the distressing aspects of a situation which is too well recognized to need either argument or emphasis here, let us consider what is the duty and the opportunity of Baptists in relation to it, with the particular sense of the obligation of denominational loyalty which characterizes them.

It appears to be the consensus of informed opinion that the organization of community churches, in which members of all evangelical communions may unite, would solve, at least in part, the religious problems with which many who dwell in rural or newly settled areas are grappling. We have now a sufficient fund of experiment and experience from which to draw some conclusions as to the form which such churches would most wisely take, and these are set forth elsewhere in this volume. Can Baptists participate in such churches?

We should probably agree that no Christians, whatever their name, should abjure or surrender their sincere convictions even for the sake of an apparent increase of practical efficiency. Loyalty to truth, as God gives us to see it, cannot ultimately be contrary to the interests of the divine kingdom. The surrender of convictions would be too high a price to pay even for the benefits of a coöperative or a united Christianity. Nor can one lightly yield the privilege of bearing witness to the world as to the whole content of his faith. Such shackles would not long be endurable to a free spirit. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." If we must sacrifice principle and silence testimony or abstain from all forms of interdenominational coöperation, no Christian could well hesitate as to his course.

But this is a false dilemma; we are faced by no such alternative. The Community Church which this volume advocates expressly provides for that freedom of witnessing and that retention of principles which a Christian conscience demands. If God has confided to you any treasure of truth, you can in such a church freely offer it to your brother and share it with him. He will have the reciprocal privilege of contributing his spiritual insight to your enlightenment. When the apostle Paul contemplated a visit to Rome he wrote his fellow Christians there that he wanted to see them because he had something to tell them that they needed to know. On second thought, however, he hastened to add that he hoped also to learn something from them! "I do yearn to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift for your strengthening—or, in other words, that I may be encouraged by meeting you, I by your faith and you by mine." That is the proper spirit for the Community Church. Baptists certainly have something to gain from their brethren: they may modestly hope that they have something also to contribute.

Must separate churches be maintained in any and every circumstance, and at whatever spiritual cost, in order to uphold the privilege and the right of Christian testimony? Cannot I commend to my brother in the same church the convictions that sustain and help me with as much propriety as though he were in a different church? Am I unwilling to submit my principles to the competition of those that do not accord with them?

Of course, if Baptists are really to commend their principles to their brother Christians, whether within or without a Community Church, they must be more thoroughly convinced, and more intelligent and well-informed as to these principles, we should all agree, than some of them are at present. And if they are to give their witness within a united church, they must do so in no contentious or factious spirit. They must be quite as willing to receive truth as to impart it—a program which would provide, without a doubt, a very wholesome discipline of soul for very many of us! As a matter of gospel fact, the penalty of sectarianism is likely to be spiritual poverty, and we never shall know the love of Christ in its breadth and length and height and depth until we approach its apprehension "with all the saints."

The denominational high sheriffs and editors and officials of the stricter sort may oppose this movement for fear of a loss in denominational statistics or in denominational funds. These are considerations of great weight, without a doubt. The denominations, as they are, are the most efficient agencies we have for the spread of the divine kingdom, and any weakening of them is to be deplored. But this movement is asking nobody's leave and will brook no one's denial. The wise course for those who are concerned for the great interests of the Kingdom of God now committed to the hands of the denominations is so to coöperate with this movement that the losses may be as small and the gains as great as possible.

The particular plan of such organization which this book proposes is peculiarly adapted to meet this end. It has it, indeed, especially in mind. It provides for the maintenance within the Community Church of the former denominational loyalties and affiliations of its members, and the retention of such formal observances as are a matter of conscience, and offers opportunity for continued support of denominational missionary enterprises, only requiring that no sectarian divisions shall mar the fellowship or obscure the common consciousness essential to the protection of the larger and deeper unities that constitute in fact a church of Jesus Christ.

After all, Baptists are Christians before they are Baptists, and the truths that they value highest are the common possession of all who name the name of Christ. They do not hold that any of the principles which they count distinctive, important though they may be, are essential to salvation. They cordially recognize that all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and who, according to their light, are seeking to follow and to serve Him, are accepted of Him, and are Christians as truly as they. This fundamentally catholic principle should open the way to hearty participation in a Community Church if the spiritual needs of the community itself appear to demand it. For those needs are paramount. Human interests have the first claim upon us. We have been taught by our Lord that institutions are made for man, not man for institutions—as in the case of the Sabbath. Churches, ordinances, and creeds will endure in proportion as they serve basic human needs, and when they cease to meet those needs we may be confident that they will disappear, as multitudes of outgrown human institutions and formulas have disappeared before them. It is for us, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, subordinating form and method and organization to the ends which these are intended to serve, and granting to others in fullest measure that right of individual interpretation which we claim for ourselves, to unite heartily with our brother Christians in a single fellowship wherever this may promise to meet more fully the actual religious needs of men.

Chapter III

CONGREGATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND COMMUNITY RELIGION

Albert W. Palmer

President of The Chicago Theological Seminary

American Congregationalists are proud of the fact that the first church of their order came to America on the *Mayflower*, and like to believe that, although some things have been changed and much has been added since those pioneer days, something of the temper and spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers still abides in "the churches of the Pilgrim faith," as they often call themselves.

In England and Wales there are over 450,000 Congregationalists, besides a small group in Scotland. Throughout the world, largely on mission fields, are 200,000 more. But, as this book is for American readers, this chapter will confine itself to the Congregational churches of the United States, which total over 900,000 members distributed in 5,497 local churches.

In general, Congregationalists like to feel they are characterized by six outstanding ideals:

1. Independence and democracy in church government;
2. Liberality and freedom in religious thought;
3. Public-mindedness and zeal for social welfare;
4. Concern for education;
5. Interest in foreign missions; and
6. Readiness to coöperate in all possible forms of inter-church work and fellowship.

Congregationalists claim, of course, no exclusive possession of these characteristics and gladly recognize and rejoice in their attainment by other bodies along other roads of progress. Indeed, the hope of Christian unity lies precisely in the tendency toward general approval of such ideals in all branches of the Protestant Church today.

The very name "Congregational" signifies the democratic basis of the church. The local congregation is supreme, and acknowledges no external control by king or bishop or synod or any other eccclesiastical machinery. It chooses its own pastor, writes its own creed, establishes its own liturgy, elects its own officers. The denomination originated in a protest against a tyrannical effort to enforce uniformity by king and bishop, and the ideals of its youth are expressed in the slogans: "A free church in a free state," and, yet more radically, "A state without a king and a church without a bishop." These revolutionary sentiments were incarnated in heroic action when the little company of independent worshipers at Scrooby in Lincolnshire, led by Pastor John Robinson and Elder Brewster, fled to Holland and later, when the *Mayflower* sailed from Leyden, to New England. From that day to this, Congregationalists have jealously guarded the freedom and autonomy of the local church.

But independence does not mean isolation, and so the Congregationalists have established fellowship by local and state associations of churches and by a National Council. They also have formed missionary societies for service at home and abroad. But all these organizations, highly prized and loyally supported, exert no direct authority upon the churches beyond the authority of the reasonableness and wisdom of their acts.

They can recommend, but they cannot compel.

The local church in all Protestant communions has attained to a relatively large degree of self-government in these days, however, and present-day Congregationalists would probably conceive their freedom and liberality in matters of religious thought to be a much more distinctive characteristic. It is quite possible, however, that freedom of church government unconsciously paved the way for freedom in matters of faith and its expression, for while early Congregational churches were as intensely Calvinistic in theology as were other Puritan sects, the denomination has, in the last fifty years, achieved a unique combination of progressive thought and evangelical warmth and fervor. Great evangelists like D. L. Moody, warm-hearted scholars like Dean Bosworth and President Henry Churchill King of Oberlin, glowing preachers like Dr. Gunsaulus of Chicago, and more radical thinkers like George A. Gordon and Washington Gladden have all found a congenial home in Congregationalism.

Membership in a Congregational church today is practically never based on the acceptance of a creed, but on a very undogmatic "covenant" which is usually a simple declaration of loyalty to Jesus Christ in one's own personal life and a purpose to walk together with the church "in all the ways of the Lord made known, or to be made known unto us." The Christian life is conceived of as an open-minded discipleship leading on to an ever deepening vision of the truth rather than the attainment, at its very beginning, of a complete system of theology.

Of course, when it comes to ordaining or installing a minister questions of theology may enter in. One who is to preach is expected, in addition to college and theological seminary training, to have definite convictions about the great questions of religion. But even here there is no external standard to which all ministers must conform and subscribe. It is left to the ordaining council to determine whether or not the candidate for ordination has the qualities of mind and faith to make it seem probable that he will be a useful Christian leader.

Congregationalists have toward their creeds an attitude not unlike that of loyal Englishmen toward the British royal family—reverencing them as symbols but not allowing them the exercise of autocratic rule! The most recent of these creeds is the statement of faith adopted at Kansas City in 1913 by the National Council, not as an authoritative standard or requirement, but simply as a fair and irenic statement of the conceptions of the Christian religion which, by and large, Congregationalists generally hold. This statement is notable for its sense of historic values without any controversial bias, and for its outlook on modern life without fanaticism or partisanship:

Preamble.—The Congregational Churches of the United States, by delegates in National Council assembled, reserving all the rights and cherished memories belonging to this organization under its former constitution, and declaring the steadfast allegiance of the churches composing the Council to the faith which our fathers confessed, which from age to age has found its expression in the historic creeds of the Church universal and of this communion, and affirming our loyalty to the basic principles of our representative democracy, hereby set forth the things most surely believed among us concerning faith, polity, and fellowship.

Faith.—We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love; and in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Savior, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men. We are united in striving to know the will of God, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood. Depend-ing, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

Polity.—We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul and the right of private judgment. We hold to the autonomy of the local church and its independence of all ecclesiastical control. We cherish the fellowship of the churches united in district, state, and national bodies, for counsel and cooperation in matters of common concern.

The wider fellowship.—While affirming the liberty of our churches, and the validity of our ministry, we hold to the unity and catholicity of the church of Christ, and will unite with all its branches in hearty cooperation; and will earnestly seek, so far as in us lies, that the prayer of our

Lord for his disciples may be answered, that they all may be one.

The value of this spirit of freedom in theology is very obvious in days like these. The scholarly interpretation of the Bible along newer lines having regard for its literary form and progressive revelation, the adjustment of science and religion, the enlargement of religious teaching to include the social as well as the individual gospel, have come with a minimum of shock and controversy in Congregational circles because the faith of the churches was so little bound by the rule of the dead hand and, therefore, so free to follow the leadership of the Spirit of Truth out into newer and more adequate adaptations of the Gospel for our own day.

The Christian Century, in reporting a meeting of the National Council of Congregational Churches, headed the article "A Public-Minded Denomination." Such public-mindedness goes back to the *Mayflower* compact, signed in the cabin of the little ship off Cape Cod, by which the Pilgrim company bound themselves into a civil body politic and promised to obey such just laws as they should themselves enact. The fact that they have already organized themselves into a self-governing church made the organization of the civil state on the same lines almost inevitable. From that time forward the churches descended from that Pilgrim group have felt a keen responsibility for civic righteousness and social welfare. It is no accident that Henry Ward Beecher sold slaves in Plymouth pulpit as a protest against slavery, or that men like Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden, Lyman Abbot, Graham Taylor, women like

Harriet Beecher Stowe and Jane Addams have arisen out of Congregational backgrounds to lift high the standards of Christian citizenship and public service.

Again, without any more binding authority than the theological statement in the last section, the National Council at Washington, D. C., in 1925 adopted a statement of social ideals. It is not imposed on any church as an authoritative standard, but the following sentences will serve to show important sympathies and general trends of thought on public questions:

> We believe in making the social and spiritual ideals of Jesus our test for community as well as for spiritual life; in strengthening and deepening the inner personal relationship of the individual with God, and recognizing his obligation and duty to society. This is crystallized in the two commandments of Jesus: "*Love thy God and love thy neigbor.*" Translating this:

Into Industry and Economic Relationships means:

A reciprocity of service—that group interests, whether of labor or capital, must always be integrated with the welfare of society as a whole, and that society in its turn must insure justice to each group.

Into Racial Relations means:

The practice of the American principle of the same protection and rights for all races who share our common life. The elimination of racial discrimination, and substitution of full brotherly treatment for all races in America.

Into International Relations means:

The removal of every unjust barrier of trade, color, creed, and race, and the practice of equal justice for all nations.

The administration of the property and privileges within each country so that they will be of the greatest benefit not only to that nation, but to all the world.

The replacement of selfish imperialism by such disinterested treatment of backward nations as to contribute the maximum to the welfare of each nation and of the world.

A permanent association of the nations for world peace and goodwill, the outlawry of war, and the settling of all differences between nations by conference, arbitration, or by an international court.

Zeal for education on the part of American Congregationalists goes far back into the life of New England, to the founding of Harvard in 1636 and Yale in 1701. From these beginnings a noble line of over forty colleges can be named, stretching from coast to coast, founded by Congregationalists and standing for high scholarship, academic freedom, and Christian character—witness the names of Dartmouth, Williams, Bowdoin, Amherst, Oberlin, Knox, Beloit, Fisk, Smith, Drury, Wellesley, Rollins, and Pomona.

Theological seminaries, characterized by high scholarship and progressive thought, are to be found at Bangor, Chicago, Hartford, Oberlin, Pacific, Talladega, and Yale, and in these schools it is not unusual to find students of many other denominations, Congregationalists sometimes being actually in a minority!

In addition to general education this denomination has also entered heartily into the special field of religious education. It has been a pioneer in better methods and graded courses for Sunday Schools. The Christian Endeavor movement was born in a Congregational church at Portland, Maine, and the names of Francis E. Clark, Marion Lawrence, Margaret Slattery, and

Sidney A. Weston are among the outstanding leaders it has contributed to the training and inspiration of youth.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions bears no denominational name because, as the first foreign missionary society in America, it had in early days Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed as well as Congregational constituents. These bodies later organized their own foreign boards, leaving the American Board Congregational in fact though not in name. Founded in 1810, as the result of a youth movement with a world vision which began in a famous student prayer-meeting held under a haystack near Williams College, this oldest of American foreign boards has sent its line out around the world. It sent out Cyrus Hamlin, who founded Robert College at Constantinople, and Joseph

Hardy Neesima, who founded Doshisha University in Japan; and all the way between are mission stations, schools, dispensaries, and hospitals which seek to express the sense of world brotherhood and world responsibility of the churches in America. And, by its business reliability, its high educational standards, its carefully chosen personnel, its sacrificial devotion without fanaticism, its scholarly insight into other faiths and cultures, the American Board has won a high place among the missionary organizations of the world.

But missions mean work for needy areas at home as well as abroad, and here, too, the Congregationalists have met the challenge of the frontier, the city, and the underprivileged races. Through the American Missionary Association they have served the Negro, Indian, and Oriental, founding

Hampton Institute, where Booker Washington was educated, and many another less known but useful Negro school. Among religious organizations at work in cities the Chicago Congregational Missionary and Extension Society may be cited as one which stands well to the forefront both in its resourceful leadership and its application of modern methods of survey and research to the religious shepherding of the great city.

All of the qualities thus far enumerated would lose no little luster were they bound up in a narrow and self-sufficient denominationalism. Such is not the case, however. No body of American Christians has been more active in movements for interdenominational coöperation. It has contributed men like Sherwood Eddy and Fred B. Smith to the Y. M. C. A. movement, Frances E. Clark to International Christian Endeavor, and S. Parkes Cadman, Charles Macfarland, and Sidney L. Gulick to the Federal Council of Churches. The Kansas City statement of faith, quoted above in Section II, closes with a definite pledge to unite earnestly in hearty coöperation with all branches of the Church of Christ. In the formation of community churches of whatever form, whether as federated, union, or independent bodies, there should be every reason to expect the heartiest coöperation from the Congregationalists of the community. Perhaps no denomination raises so few barriers between itself and other bodies of believers.

If this chapter has seemed to any reader of any other branch of the Christian faith unduly to exalt our particular fellowship, the author would hasten to add that whatever Congregationalism may have achieved it will gladly contribute as its part in a total American Christianity wherever such a larger unit can be organized in village, state, or nation with due regard to safeguarding the spiritual freedom of the Christian disciple. It is written of the holy city that, at last, they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations unto it. In like manner must not the glory and honor of the denominations at last be brought unto the complete body of the Christian fellowship?

Chapter IV

PRINCIPLES OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AND COMMUNITY RELIGION

Winfred Ernest Garrison

Literary Editor of THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY

THE movement which issued in the rise of the religious body known as the Disciples of Christ originated in western Pennsylvania and the adjacent parts of West Virginia, at that time Virginia, and Ohio early in the nineteenth century. Though its local congregations are commonly called "Christian churches," it is to be distinguished from the denomination called "the Christian Church."

The central motive was a conviction of the un-Christian nature of the bitter denominational rivalries of the time and of the inefficiency of a divided church as an instrument for saving the world. The curve of its thought and the method of its procedure were determined by the discovery that the conditions of fellowship in the church today should be identical with the terms of salvation as laid down in the New Testament, and that these consisted of a very simple program expressive of the mind of Christ. It began with no revolt against any item in the orthodox doctrines of the existing churches, but rather with a protest against the place of importance which has been assigned to these doctrines in holding them as divinely revealed truths to be embodied in the very constitution of the church instead of as deductions drawn by human reason and to be held as private opinions. It involved opposition neither to doctrine in general nor to any particular system of doctrine, whether Calvinistic or Arminian, but to the erection of doctrines into dogmas which necessarily became divisive.

At first there was even no commitment to any specific body of teaching as to what are the conditions of salvation laid down in the New Testament, but only the conviction that these must be found by patient and unprejudiced investigation, and that, whatever they turned out to be, they would be sufficient. That the leaders were as open-minded in reality as they were in theory is evidenced by the fact that, as their study proceeded, they arrived at some conclusions which had been far from their imagination when they began. It is a matter of some significance that the Disciples began with a principle and not with a body of conclusions.

Thomas Campbell, an Irish Seceder Presbyterian minister, who had migrated to this region in 1807, became an ardent advocate of union by reason of his own experiences, first among the subdivided sects of Scottish and Irish Presbyterianism, and later among the scattered and denominationally divided pioneers on the frontier. He was virtually driven out of the Presbyterian ministry, not for heresy, but for extending fellowship in the Lord's Supper to persons of variant theology and various religious connections.

With the coöperation of his son, Alexander, who had come under the influence of the Haldane brothers, whose movement for the revival of religion in Scotland was at its height while he was a student at Glasgow, he organized a little group of associates into what was at first merely a "Christian association" — comparable to Wesley's early "societies"—designed for the mutual edification of its members and to promote the study of the principle which they had adopted as well as the dissemination of their idea for the reformation of the church, but not intended to separate them from the churches in which they held membership. But in this case, also, as in Wesley's, and much more quickly in this case, the group which began by functioning as a church without the name, soon became one.

The structural ideas that were embodied in this enterprise were: first, an ardent evangelical desire to redeem and enrich the lives of men by the gospel of Christ; second, the belief that only a united church could accomplish this; and third, the thought that the basis of union must be the essential and imperishable religion of Jesus, as the New Testament records portray it, centering in personal loyalty and obedience to Him, rather than any formulation of doctrines, however correct. It was their conviction that all human and speculative opinions should be eliminated from the test of fellowship, and that Christian men in their thinking, and the church in its organization and practice, must be free from every sort of overhead tyranny, and especially from "clerical domination." Their purpose was, in Alexander Campbell's phrase, "to make the doors of the church as wide as the gates of heaven."

It occurred to this little body of reformers that the most obvious road to these ends lay through the "restoration of the ancient order of things"—that is to say, the establishment of churches which should reproduce as exactly as possible the faith, organization, ordinances, and terms of admission of the apostolic church. In their enthusiasm for this enterprise, they doubtless overlooked the fact—as many of their followers have done—that there was no novelty in this formula as a method of reformation. Practically all of the religious reformers of the preceding three centuries had conducted their reformations on the theory and in the belief that they were restoring whatever was essential and normative in primitive Christianity. The sixteenth-century reformers had undertaken to restore the doctrines of the New Testament—that is, of the primitive church; the seventeenth-century defenders of episcopacy and presbytery had asserted that their respective forms of organization were those divinely authorized and practiced from the beginning; the numerous small and separative sects which had arisen in England and Scotland during the eighteenth century had laid stress upon the necessity of restoring the forms of worship and the ordinances as practiced by the earliest Christians. The contrast between "reformation" and "restoration," upon which emphasis is sometimes laid, is merely a matter of words. The specific contribution of Mr. Campbell as a "restorer of primitive Christianity" was not in the discovery of the idea, but in proposing, at first, that the field of necessary agreement with reference to the things restored should be limited to those things which were clearly requisite to salvation, then to the things which had been essential to membership in the primitive church.

In the course of their search for the particulars of such a program, Mr. Campbell and his colleagues soon came to the position that the immersion of believers was the apostolic form of baptism, that it was an indispensable element in the "plan of salvation," and that it had been an invariable condition of admission to church membership in apostolic days. It must therefore be a condition of membership now. The adoption of this practice brought them into harmony with the Baptists in the matter which most conspicuously distinguished them from other Protestant parties, and soon led to full fellowship with that body. Having started out to plead for union, they had no desire to maintain a separate existence. But they joined the Baptist communion with a definite sense of mission which did not permit them to be merged indistinguishably in the general mass. They were still reformers, though now reformers within a denomination.

As their study of the Scriptures proceeded, they were led to the adoption of certain doctrines and practices which were at variance with those generally held by the Baptists. It was perhaps inevitable that a separation should ultimately occur—inevitable, that is, on the supposition that people cannot live together in the same religious organization unless they are agreed upon all matters of belief and custom. The "reformers" did not consider that such agreement was essential to church fellowship. They were perfectly willing to remain in the Baptist fold, although they thought that most Baptists were wrong on some important points—for example, that they laid too much stress upon an emotional experience in conversion, and that they gave to their regional associations too much authority over local churches or over matters which should be wholly the concern of the local churches. Mr. Campbell expressed the hope that the future historian "in the year 1900" might be able to record that the Baptists were the only people in the history of the world who had ever permitted a reformer to live and work among them. His idea was that the correction of errors should come from the inside without breach of fellowship, and that the Baptist denomination might become the nucleus of a church united upon the apostolic terms of membership and gradually approximating the primitive model in doctrine, polity, and worship. But it was not so to be. About 1830, after seventeen years of union with the Baptists, the "reformers" found themselves being forced into the position of a separate group by the withdrawal of the fellowship of the Baptist churches and associations from them. In some cases they precipitated the separation by disbanding Baptist associations in which they had a majority.

As a separate body, naturally they tended all the more to develop a definite set of religious ideas and customs, a body of characteristic doctrines and a vocabulary of their own. They drew to themselves those who were like-minded and repelled those who were not, so that the growing group had a large measure of agreement upon many matters other than those upon which, in principle, they considered agreement essential to fellowship. While protesting against denominationalism, and against that fundamental principle of denominationalism that there could not be fellowship without doctrinal agreement, they took on all the external marks of a denomination. Many of them resented the application of the term "denomination" to themselves. Mr. Campbell did not, but his followers did and most of them do now. The only reasonable ground for protest against it is the belief that they represent the original and true form of Christianity, while all others are departures and perversions. But then, all the others claim that, too. Nevertheless, their insistence that they were not a denomination was and is a symbol of their devotion to the ideal of the unity of the church and of their continuing refusal to be complacent about a divided Christendom.

Just what were the peculiar views and practices which caused them to be cast out of the Baptist ranks is not now a matter of much consequence. Some of them are points upon which the Disciples themselves are not now agreed, and probably not one of them could now be made a serious issue between Baptists and Disciples. Nor would Thomas Campbell be in any danger of being either censured or expelled by the Presbyterians, as he was in 1807, if he were alive today and said and did precisely the same things that then constituted the head and front of his offending. Walter Scott, who was perhaps the most intimate and influential associate of the Campbells in the formative stage of their movement, took some pride in the belief that together they had discovered and put into practice that "particular ecclesiastical order" which was characteristic of the primitive church and therefore precisely right to the exclusion of all others. The phrase has a strange sound to the ears of Disciples today. Not many of them are greatly interested in restoring a particular ecclesiastical order. The progress of religious thought and of historical and biblical scholarship during the past three-quarters of a century has undermined the two presuppositions upon which that conception rested, *viz.*, the idea that the church of the first century constituted a pattern to be copied in all the details of its beliefs, forms of worship, methods of organization, and ethical codes; and the conception of the New Testament as an inerrant record by which that pattern can be reconstructed without the possibility of error. It has relegated to the category of "opinion" many matters which were held to be indisputable revelations of divine truth, but it has reinforced the conviction that such things do not determine the quality of a man's Christianity and hence should not be permitted to divide Christians into sects and parties.

The Disciples have grown within a little more than a century from a small country congregation on the frontier to a body numbering more than a million and a half. Their strength is in the Middle West and, for the most part, in the smaller cities and towns. They have made relatively slight progress in the East and in the great metropolitan centers. Their missionary and benevolent work has been reasonably proportionate to their resources, and they have both built up worthy educational institutions of their own and patronized largely the universities and colleges maintained by others. During the last thirty years their candidates for the ministry have increasingly availed themselves of the resources of the best universities and theological seminaries in the country, regardless of denominational connection. They have taken an active part in the great interdenominational movements, such as the International Council of Religious Education, Christian Endeavor, and the Federal Council of Churches. There has always been among them an element insistent upon maintaining a non-coöperative attitude as a testimony to the "peculiar plea" which they felt it the special mission of the Disciples to promote; but their most representative leaders and the great body of the laity have considered it both possible and desirable to maintain close fraternal relations with other religious bodies.

The development of thought among the Disciples, as already indicated in this brief sketch, passed rather rapidly through three stages: *First*, agreement on a plea for union on the very simplest and most indisputable essentials of Christianity, these essentials being still undefined. *Second*, agreement on a specific "plan of salvation"—faith, repentance, and baptism—as constituting the authoritative terms for admission to the church and basis for union. *Third*, substantial agreement on a wide range of doctrinal and practical matters relating to the organization and worship of the church and the administration of the ordinances, such as a doctrine of the design of baptism, the practice of an extreme form of congregational independency, the minimizing of the special prerogatives and functions of the clergy, the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. These last enter into the picture as a description of the Disciples as an actual group, but have never been regarded as essentials of the faith or as necessary characteristics of Disciples. At the present time there is, for example, no interest whatever in any particular theory of the design of baptism, and it creates no excitement when some prominent and respected minister argues for a modification of strict congregational independence in the direction of a presbyterial or other system, as some in fact have done.

The Disciples have been fond of slogans and have coined and used many of them. The most popular, perhaps, has been "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent"—a formula which seemed a simple solvent for all problems in an age which regarded the words of Scripture as both inerrant in their teaching and unmistakable in their meaning. Almost equally popular, and expressive of the desire to avoid divisions over doubtful and disputatious points, is the phrase, almost as old as Protestantism, "In things essential, unity; in things non-essential, liberty; in all things, charity." But there has been no slogan truer to the original spirit of the movement than the phrase of Alexander Campbell, who hoped to see "the doors of the church as wide as the gates of heaven." In so far as Disciples still cherish this hope, out of which their movement originally grew, their attitude toward the community church cannot be other than one of hospitality and coöperation.

Chapter V

METHODIST PRINCIPLES AND COMMUNITY RELIGION

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The Methodist movement was born at Oxford University in the early eighteenth century. Here a group of earnest students studying for the priesthood in the Church of England, and disturbed by the deadness of the religious life of the time, began to meet, first for prayer and Bible study; then gradually broadening their activities, they visited the prisons, and in other ways attempted to reach the poor and the outcast. Other students called them "Methodists" in derision, because of their methodical religious observances. The outstanding leaders in this little group were John Wesley and his brother Charles, and George Whitefield. Charles Wesley became the sweet singer of the movement and was the author of several thousand hymns; George Whitefield above everything else was a preacher; while John Wesley became the chief organizer.

Once out of Oxford, these three leaders began the work of carrying religion and morality to the masses of the people. Never had England heard such preaching or such singing; never had England witnessed such results. Whitefield started the practice of preaching in the fields or in the city streets, for soon the pulpits of the English Church were closed against them, though all were ordained ministers of that church. Gradually little groups began to be formed here and there under the care of the Wesley brothers, the first such society being organized in

London in 1739, and John Wesley drew up a set of rules for its regulation and control. Other societies, as they were formed, adopted these rules and soon John and Charles Wesley found themselves traveling over England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, visiting these societies, forming new ones, and organizing groups of societies into circuits.

All this was a movement within the Church of England. In fact the Wesleys never thought of English Methodism in any other light. Its best ministers were all Church of England clergymen. Lay preaching, however, was soon adopted as a Methodist practice, for there soon came to be so many Methodist classes and circuits that the regularly ordained ministers could not supply them all. Lay preaching came to be one of the most important features of English

Methodism, and it was the lay, or "local," preachers who were the first to bring Methodism to America. The earliest of them came as immigrants from Ireland about 1760, and the first Methodist classes in America were formed in 1766, one in New York City, another, perhaps a little earlier, in Maryland. Two years later John Wesley sent over two preachers as missionaries to the American colonies; and three years later (1771) Francis Asbury was sent to join the two already there. In 1773 the first American Methodist Conference met in Philadelphia, attended by ten preachers who reported 1,160 members.

At the opening of the American Revolution all the preachers which Mr. Wesley had sent over to America returned to England except Francis Asbury. But Methodism continued to grow in spite of the war, and at its close there were eighty preachers and nearly fifteen thousand members in America. But the American Methodists were not yet a separate church, for they still considered themselves as a part of the Established Church of England. They were, also, without ordained preachers, and as there were few Established Church ministers in sympathy with them, they were largely deprived of the sacraments. This fact stimulated Mr. Wesley to ordain two of his English preachers, and to appoint Dr. Thomas Coke, already an ordained minister of the Church of England, as superintendent for America, together with Francis Asbury. He also drew up a form of organization and a form of service and a collection of psalms and hymns for the American Methodists, which he sent to America by Dr. Coke and his two associates. The American Methodist preachers came together at Baltimore in 1784, at what was known as the "Christmas" Conference, to meet Dr. Coke and discuss Wesley's proposals. Here they adopted Wesley's plan of organization, confirmed his appointment of Coke and Asbury as superintendents, ordained several other ministers, and thus was constituted the Methodist Episcopal Church.

This brief statement as to the way in which Methodism began is necessary if we are to understand the things for which Methodism has stood; for the Methodist movement grew out of the needs of the times. Transplanted to America, it was soon found that the Methodist system of organization and the kind of gospel it preached were well suited to the needs of a new country, and especially well adapted to follow a moving and restless population.

The circuit system, by which one preacher covered a great stretch of territory, where settlements were scattered and far between, proved to be especially effective in reaching the people on the frontier. The Methodist gospel, emphasizing free grace, free will, and individual responsibility, fitted in exactly with the new democracy rising in the West, for both emphasized actual equality among all men. The Methodists also made the most effective use of the camp-meetings. In its origin the camp-meeting was interdenominational in character, but the Methodists made the largest use of it, and by 1811 there were between four and five hundred outdoor meetings held annually, giving the Methodists access to people who could have been reached in no other way.

Though Methodism began in America as a movement largely among uneducated people, and although most of the early preachers were self-trained men, yet it must be remembered that the Methodist movement was born in a university and that its founders were men of culture and education. These facts have had a large influence on Methodism in America and help to account for the fact that the American Methodists have established more colleges and universities than any other single American denomination. Also great emphasis from the very beginning of Methodism was placed upon the use of Christian literature. John Wesley himself used the printing-press as few men ever have used it, and wrote hundreds of books and pamphlets. With such a background it is not strange that the Methodists were the first American church to establish a press, and the Methodist Book Concern, today, founded in 1789, is a vast business concern worth many millions of dollars, and doing a business of far more than Methodist significance. It is an interesting fact that the trade name of the Methodist Book Concern, "The Abingdon Press," was chosen because the first American college established by the Methodists was at Abingdon, Virginia, while the name of that first college, "Cokesbury," has been chosen by the Book Concern of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as their trade name.

It is true that even yet many Methodist ministers are uneducated men, as far as the schools are concerned, but since 1816 the Methodist Episcopal Church has maintained a supervised course of study and reading for all young ministers. In this way ministers who have not had the advantages of college or seminary training receive not only practical preparation for their work of the ministry, but habits of reading are established which help to keep them fully alive to modern tendencies in thought and life. These are some of the factors which account for the rapid growth of American Methodism.

Methodism has never stood on a doctrinal basis; in fact, there are no specifically Methodist doctrines. When Wesley abridged the thirty-nine articles of the English Church as a doctrinal standard for the American Methodists, he left out everything of a sectarian nature, so that they could be subscribed to by almost any evangelical Christian. The sole requirement for admission to the early Methodist classes was a "desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins." When Wesley was a very old man he reaffirmed this position, saying: "They (Methodists) do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatsoever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees: let them be Churchmen, or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, it is no obstacle. Let them choose one mode of baptism or another, it is no bar to their admission. The Presbyterian may be a Presbyterian still; the Independent and Anabaptist use his own mode of worship. So may the Quaker; and none will contend with him about it. They think and let think."

In spite of this very broad doctrinal platform, the Methodists have stood, through the years, for some very definite things. Since Methodism arose largely as a protest against formalism, it naturally stressed inner experience. The distinctive Methodist emphasis therefore falls upon at least three aspects of religious experience: *conversion*, *sanctification*, and the *witness of the Spirit*. By conversion they mean the passage from moral deadness to moral life. By sanctification they mean the "extension of spiritual influence to all parts of man's nature." The Methodist also believes in what he calls *assurance*, or the witness of the Spirit. However, Methodists do not claim any monopoly upon these emphases. Others have held them and still hold them.

Although the early Methodist movement was characterized by warmth of emotion, manifesting itself in great revivals, from the very first it laid particular stress upon the religious instruction and Christian nurture of children. And in a sense this is one of the finest traditions of Methodism.

Methodism has always laid great emphasis upon the practical. Wesley used the Scriptures "with a life purpose." He sought to make the most out of them for life, and thus a modern Methodist will seek for such a conception of the Bible "as will best fit them into the demands of total experience." The Methodists, from the beginning, have been concerned with the social emphasis. It is true Methodists have always sought for individual salvation, but the rules John Wesley drew up are as much concerned with social conduct as with individual exercises.

What has Methodism contributed to the religious life of America? First, Methodism has been characterized throughout its history by a splendid zeal. Second, it has contributed a sane emphasis upon emotion in religion. But Methodists have never been content with simply an appeal to the emotions, but have, as a rule, harnessed these floods of emotion to some form of practical effort. Third, Methodism has contributed a sense of the value of organization, and this emphasis, in one way or another, has influenced practically every other evangelical church in America. I think it may be truthfully stated that no religious body has ever more wisely used zeal and emotion for the general uplifting of human life. And certainly there is no emphasis more greatly needed in the religious life of our own day than the same zeal and enthusiasm which made the Methodist circuit-riders willing to be sent to their endless circuits to preach the great Christian doctrines of conversion, sanctification, and assurance.

Do Methodists need to surrender any of the great principles which they have emphasized through the years, if they should join in a community movement with other Christians? I would answer this question with an emphatic No! Every Methodist can bring his zeal and enthusiasm with him into any such organization and will be welcomed all the more heartily because of it. Then the great doctrines for which Methodists have stood are commonly held by all the participating groups, although perhaps the Methodists have given them a somewhat different emphasis. Of course the form of organization adopted by a community church may not necessarily be Methodistic, but even Methodist polity is not uniform. In England and in other countries the Methodists have adopted forms of church government which do not correspond to that in the United States, for Mr. Wesley always contended that there was no specific form of church polity laid down in the New Testament and therefore it is in full harmony with Mr. Wesley's own teaching, in this respect, to adopt that form of church organization best suited to a given situation.

Chapter VI

PRESBYTERIAN PRINCIPLES AND COMMUNITY RELIGION

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THE word Presbyterianism may be used in two senses: either to describe a type of church government or to designate a particular body of Christians. In the former sense Presbyterianism means literally government by presbyters[1] that is, by officials chosen by the congregation to represent them in church councils, known respectively as sessions, presbyteries, synods, and assemblies, and set apart for their office by ordination by their fellow presbyters. Presbyterianism in this sense is not confined to the Presbyterian Church. It is a form of government practiced by all the reformed churches and many Lutheran bodies, and is a feature in the polity of other churches as well.

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[1] Cf. Moffatt, J., *The Presbyterian Churches*, p. 1. "Presbyterianism is the name for belief in the apostolic and catholic church as governed by presbyters." In addition to the presbyters in the technical sense, who are ministers of the word and sacraments, Presbyterians recognize other spiritual officers called elders, who with the minister constitute the session of the local church and with the minister are eligible to membership in presbytery, synod, and general assembly.

In the second sense Presbyterian denotes a group of churches which date their origin from the notable experiment inaugurated by John Calvin, at Geneva. Not all these churches, as we have seen, use the word Presbyterian as their official title, most of the continental churches, whether Dutch, German, French, or Hungarian, preferring the word Reformed. In England and the United States, however, the title Presbyterian has become their official designation. There is a Presbyterian Church in England, in Scotland, in Ireland, and in Wales, and in the United States there are no less than 9 bodies, comprising 15,592 churches, and including in all 2,561,986 members.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to retrace the history of the Presbyterian churches or to give an account of their present organization, numbers, or activities. These can be studied in the appropriate histories or found in more condensed and convenient form in the Year Book of the Federal Council of the Churches. Our purpose in the present chapter is to give some account of the genius of the movement from which these churches sprang, to point out some valuable contributions which they have made to the Christian life of the past, and to indicate what permanent gifts they may have to pass on to the unified church of the future.

We may consider any church from the

four-fold point of view of the gospel it preaches, the type of worship it promotes, the form of government it observes, and the kind of life it fosters.

Theologically speaking, Presbyterians belong to the Calvinistic branch of Protestantism. Their central tenet is the sovereignty of God. They believe that whatever freedom man possesses (and historically Presbyterians have held a high doctrine of human responsibility) it is consistent with the divine control. In the earlier history of the movement this emphasis upon divine sovereignty was carried to extreme lengths, and those who held diverging views of human liberty were looked upon with suspicion and often excluded from office in the church. In recent years, however, this narrow position has been modified and today men who hold very different theories of the will are working side by side in the Presbyterian ministry.

A second emphasis in Presbyterian theology has been upon man's duty to keep the divine law. This law Presbyterians believe to be revealed in the Bible, which thus becomes the final standard of both faith and practice. In common with all the more important Protestant bodies, Presbyterians hold that each individual is bound to study the Bible for himself, and that when it is thus studied it will be found to contain all things necessary for Man's salvation, faith, and life. But while insisting upon the necessity of the witness of the Spirit for a saving knowledge of these essential articles, Presbyterians have also held that the Bible must be taken in its plain and literal sense, and have, therefore, insisted that their ministers should understand the original language in which the Testaments were composed. While Presbyterians ask of the members of their churches only a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they not only make definite doctrinal requirements of candidates for the ministry, but hold them to a high standard of scholarly attainment. This combination of a simple and catholic basis of church membership, with the demand for an educated ministry, has been characteristic of Presbyterianism throughout its history.

The doctrinal standards of Presbyterianism are the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, which were adopted by the Westminster Assembly of 1643-1648. These documents, which contain many famous definitions which have entered into the ecclesiastical tradition of Protestantism, have not only had a wide influence upon Presbyterians, but have largely influenced other churches as well, notably the Congregationalists and the Baptists. The more extreme statements in these documents have, however, been modified in various ways by later revision, and those who desire to understand the present doctrinal position of the Presbyterian churches must take these revisions into account.

In their attitude toward worship Presbyterians occupy an intermediate position between liturgical churches like the Episcopal and the advocates of a free service like the Congregationalists and the Disciples. While free prayer has always been practiced in the Presbyterian churches, they have preserved many elements in the liturgical tradition, and in their attitude toward the sacraments, notably that of the Lord's Supper, they occupy a more conservative position than some of their sister churches. A convenient view of the present practice of a considerable body of American presbyteries may be gained from a study of the Book of Worship which was edited by the General Assembly of 1904 for voluntary use in the churches.

Reference has already been made to the form of government of the Presbyterian churches. This combines a jealous safeguarding of the rights of the individual congregation to choose its own ministers, with a thoroughly representative system so far as the church at large is concerned. The ecclesiastical unit of Presbyterianism is not the individual congregation, but the presbytery, a body composed of representatives of the different congregations within a specified locality. This body has certain definite rights and performs certain indispensable functions with reference to the location of churches, the calling and transfer of ministers, the licensing of candidates for the ministry, and their discipline in case of moral and doctrinal delinquency. The Presbyterians of a certain area send representatives to the synod, an intermediate body, which meets at stated intervals, and also to the General Assembly, which is the supreme judicatory of the church and which is the final court of appeal in matters of doctrine and discipline.

In addition to this formal organization, the Presbyterian church possesses certain boards appointed by the General Assembly, through which the educational and missionary work of the church as a whole is carried on. Though of considerably later origin than the original bodies, these boards have a very important function and are one of the most effective means through which Presbyterians coöperate with the boards of sister churches, in great enterprises of common concern.

No account of the genius of Presbyterianism would be complete which did not call attention to the interest which Presbyterians have always taken in church unity and the ways in which they have coöperated with their fellow Christians to bring it about. While it is true that in the early history there were not a few Presbyterians who insisted that Presbyterianism existed *jure divino*, that is the only properly authorized form of church government, and while there has always been a minority in the church which has held these views, the great majority of Presbyterians today, while believing that Presbyterianism is an orderly and effective form of church government, do not hold that it is the only one permitted by the New Testament and gladly recognize their fellow Christians of the Congregational and Episcopal polity as constituent members with themselves in the church of Jesus Christ. They have been from the first, members of the Federal Council, have coöperated in local federations, and taken active part in the international conferences of Stockholm and Lausanne.

Indeed, it may fairly be said that Presbyterians have sometimes found it easier to unite with other Christians than to live in peace with their brethren of the same family. The history of Presbyterianism is the history of many divisions and reunions, both on the other side of the water and on this. Happily, the tendency of today is in the direction of union, as the recent union of the two great branches of Scottish Presbyterianism shows, as well as the action of the great majority of the Presbyterians in Canada in uniting with the Methodists and Congregationalists to form the United Church of Canada. It is to be hoped that these reunions may presage similar reunions among the divided branches of American Presbyterianism.

Passing from the more distinctly ecclesiastical to the broader aspects of our subject, it is to be remarked that among those who have made conspicuous contribution to the cause of civil and religious liberty Presbyterians have been well represented. John Witherspoon was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and while the statement often made that the government of the United States is modeled on the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, is without historical justification, there are yet interesting parallels between the two systems. Presbyterianism has always had an attraction for men of legal mind and many distinguished jurists and judges have been in its membership. It has fostered a robust and independent type of manhood, while at the same time, because of its clear recognition of the function of law in human society, it has trained men who have found themselves able to coöperate with others of whatever name and polity in the prosecution of great causes in church and state.

In the present movement for unity, Presbyterians seem in many respects fitted to play a useful rôle. Standing midway between the two contrasted types of polity, the Episcopalians with their insistence on the three orders of the ministry and the Congregationalists with their emphasis upon the independence of the local congregation, they have interesting points of contact with both and may, in the providence of God, if wisely led, be used to bring the two closer together.

Chapter VII

PRINCIPLES OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND COMMUNITY RELIGION

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The Protestant Episcopal Church is the daughter of the Church of England, and while ecclesiastically independent, is "far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline or worship" (Preface to the Book of Common Prayer).

The doctrinal standards of the church are found in the Book of Common Prayer, and more particularly in the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. The former creed is interpreted in the Offices of Instruction. To the question, "What do you chiefly learn in these Articles of your belief?" the people answer,

First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world.

Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.

Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God.

And this Holy Trinity, One God, I praise and magnify.

The Protestant Episcopal Church differs from the Church of England in omitting the Athanasian creed from its liturgy, and in not requiring subscription to its Articles of Religion, which correspond to the Westminster and other Confessions of the reformed churches. These Articles of Religion are bound in a single volume with the Book of Common Prayer, but constitute no part of the latter, and do not possess its authority. They serve, however, as a reminder of the part of this church in the

Protestant Reformation.

In its organization the Protestant Episcopal Church differs widely from the Church of England. Its diocesan bishops and their coadjutors and suffragans are elected, not appointed; their powers are strictly limited and defined by a written constitution; and the laity are given a large place in the management of church affairs. The constitution of the church was adopted in general convention in 1789. Among the deputies to this convention were men who drafted the constitution of the United States. The provisions for representative government are strikingly similar. Vestries are to be elected by congregations; they in turn elect the rectors of parishes; and rectors and other clergy together with elected delegates represent the parishes in diocesan conventions which correspond to state legislatures. Diocesan bishops are elected by these clerical and lay delegates, who vote separately by orders, their concurrence being necessary for an election. Once in three years the bishops of the church and clerical and lay deputies elected by diocesan conventions or representing missionary jurisdictions meet in general convention, where the House of Bishops, sitting as a separate body, corresponds to the Senate of the United States, and the House of Deputies to the House of Representatives. Legislation may be initiated in either House, but concurrent action is required to make it effective. No change can be made in the constitution of the church or in the Prayer Book unless it is first enacted by one general convention, then reported back to all the dioceses, and then reënacted at the next general convention. This process retards change—it has taken twenty years to complete the recent revision of the Prayer Book—but the rights of the dioceses are protected by it, and substantial unanimity is secured.

This principle of representative government which characterizes the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church has a direct bearing upon its relations with other Christian bodies, whether Catholic or Protestant. These relations, as, specifically, in the matter of representation in the Federal Council of Churches, may be determined only by the action of general convention. No individual bishop, nor the House of Bishops, and no group within the church, however numerous or influential, has power to take separate action. The church can take action only as a whole, and by constitutional means.

Another principle must be taken into account. In spite of its complete independence, the Protestant Episcopal Church is in closest sympathy and fellowship with its sister churches of the Anglican communion throughout the world, the Churches of England, Ireland, and Wales; the Episcopal Church in Scotland; the Church of England in Australia, Canada, India, Tasmania, the West Indies; the Church of the Province of South Africa, and of the diocese in eastern South America; Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui in China, and Nippon Sei Kokwai in Japan. In the summer of 1930 bishops of the Anglican communion came from five continents and far-off islands to meet at Lambeth under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and took counsel together concerning the state of the church. Questions of fundamental importance were considered, such as the South

India proposals, which looked toward organic unity in that distant mission field upon the basis of the famous Lambeth Quadrilateral. In these deliberations, American and colonial bishops had an equal voice with the bishops of London, Winchester, and other ancient sees, some of which were established before Alfred the Great became the ruler of a united England. Having these relationships in mind, it is reasonable to assume that whenever an essential point involving doctrine, discipline, or worship is at stake, the Protestant Episcopal Church, even though legally free to act independently, will feel itself under a moral obligation to act with due consideration for the mind and purpose of its sister churches of the Anglican communion.

It may be further noted that churches of the Anglican communion occupy a peculiar position among the churches of Christendom. Owing to historical circumstances upon which there is not space here to enlarge, the Anglican communion is at one and the same time Catholic and Protestant. By reason of its retention of the historic episcopate it finds itself more closely related to the episcopally governed churches of Rome and of the East than is or can be the case with any non-episcopal organization. Furthermore, its liturgy closely resembles theirs, the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion being a translation into English of the Canon of the Mass, while in its observance of the church year and in its emphasis upon the sacraments it draws near to them again. Leaving the papacy out of consideration, as an unauthorized expansion of the powers of a single bishop against which the Eastern Orthodox churches have protested from the beginning, its ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons is identical with theirs. Rightly or wrongly, Episcopalians, in common with other Anglicans, believe that "from the Apostles' time there have been these three Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church," and that the continuation of these ancient orders has made possible the unity and continuity of their church. They go further, and without impugning the validity of non-episcopal ministries, they believe that the historic episcopate, adapted to local conditions, is the best instrument for promoting organic unity throughout the Christian world. In this they may be right or wrong, but it is their sincere and deep conviction.

On the other hand, in virtue of participation in the Protestant Reformation the churches of the Anglican communion stand in a closer relation to the non-episcopal and non-liturgical churches than is or can be possible for the churches of Rome and the East. In the sixteenth century the Church of England put away many accretions which had gathered like barnacles upon it during the Middle Ages, renounced allegiance to the See of Rome, and resumed its ancient liberties. (The church was planted in Britain and sent forth devoted missionaries before the papacy was heard of, and three British bishops, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelfius of Cærleon, were present at the Council of Arles in 314.) It translated its liturgy into "a tongue understanded of the people." It rediscovered the Bible and placed it in the hands of the people as the Great Charter of their civil and religious liberties: in no church in Christendom is the Bible more highly regarded, and in none is more careful provision made for its systematic reading. Today the sympathies of the majority of its people, especially among the laity, are determined by the Reformation. In the words of the *Modern Churchman*, "To love our ecclesiastical neighbors, to reunite with those who have been separate from us during the last three hundred and fifty years and for whose separation we are in some measure to blame, that is our first duty."

This being a general and strong desire, what can be done to realize it? More particularly, what interim steps can be taken to further coöperation while waiting for an organic unity which is still a long way off?

Much, every way, if action is taken soberly, advisedly, and with due regard for the diversities within the Anglican communion which, if understood and respected, will be found to be not its weakness, but its strength. In no other church in Christendom can such diversities be found. Nowhere else can the Catholic and Protestant elements in the Christian religion be found fused to the same extent. On one corner of a city block one may find in an Episcopal church the fullest exercise of Catholic beliefs and practices, the Mass sung with all its ancient splendor of ceremonial, the Sacrament reserved and regarded as embodying the adorable Presence of the Lord, confessions heard, unction administered to the dying, requiems sung for the dead. Within a stone's-throw may be found another Episcopal church where the altar has been replaced by a communion table, and where the beliefs and practices of the people are as Protestant as the Westminster Confession! Most Episcopalians are not made suspicious or resentful by these differences; they welcome them as expressions of the comprehensiveness of their church. They find in its Catholicism the recognition of the rights of a beloved community; the authority of collective experience; the strength and sweetness of the corporate life. And they find in its Protestantism the recognition of the sacredness of human personality; acceptance of the authority of conscience; declaration of the priesthood of all believers; and of the direct and immediate relationship in which every redeemed soul stands to its redeeming God. So by Christian unity the Episcopalian does not mean "pan-Protestantism," nor does he mean eventual submission to the rigidities of Rome. He means unity in diversity, one body with many members, unity of spirit manifested in differences of expression.

This comprehensive character of the Protestant Episcopal Church, ("the roomiest church in Christendom" was what Phillips Brooks affectionately termed it) determines what one may call its foreign relations. The Anglo-Catholic wing of the church is closer in beliefs and practices to the churches of Rome and the East than is the case with the Evangelical; the Evangelical is closer than the Anglo-Catholic to its Protestant neighbors. Each wing of the church must have regard for the other, so that sympathy with those outside does not find expression in ways which produce discord and confusion within. And so, to answer briefly but specifically the question raised in this symposium, in a community where there is no Episcopal church, Episcopalians may be expected to relate themselves to a community church in such ways as are consonant with their primary allegiance.

In some cases this is a simple matter. Canon 11 of the Canons of the church provides that "in case any Minister who has not received episcopal ordination shall desire to receive such orders from a Bishop of this Church to the Diaconate and to the Priesthood without giving up or denying his fellowship or his ministry in the Communion to which he belongs, the Bishop of the Diocese or Missionary District in which he lives" may confirm and ordain him under certain specified conditions. Where the pastor of a community church desires and obtains such episcopal ordination, the problem of his ministry to Anglicans is solved.

Such a solution, however, is still quite exceptional, and the question of the relation of Episcopalians to a church in which the pastor has not received episcopal ordination remains to be considered. Will Episcopalians living in a community in which this is the only church attend its services? In the opinion of the writer, to do so is not only their privilege, but their manifest duty. Canon 48, "Of the Due Celebration of Sundays," requires that "all persons within this Church shall celebrate and keep the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, by regular participation in the public worship of the Church, by hearing the Word of God read and taught, and by other acts of devotion and works of charity, using all godly and sober conversation." Unless the bishop of the diocese or missionary district in which they live interprets this canon otherwise and is legally sustained in his interpretation, it would appear to the writer that Episcopalians are governed by it in this instance. They may look to the pastor of the community church to read and teach them the Word of God. They may also look to him to baptize, marry, officiate at burials, visit them in sickness or in the ordinary course of his pastoral ministrations, and pray with them and comfort them in bereavement. They cannot look to him to administer the rite of confirmation, and when they are ready and desirous to be confirmed, their bishop should be notified. And at least once a year, but oftener if convenient, Episcopalians will desire and are in duty bound to receive at the hands of their bishop or of an episcopally ordained priest the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, not as a mark of separation from their non-episcopal neighbors, but as a mark of their membership in and communion with the particular branch of the Universal Church of Christ to which they themselves belong.

Chapter VIII

THE TRANSFORMATION OF PROTESTANTISM

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Protestantism is manifestly undergoing a transformation. It entered upon the stage of European history in an age of uncontrollable dissension. It was not the Reformation that created this condition; the leaders of the Reformation made earnest efforts to overcome it. But the decline and fall of the mediæval church, like that of the Roman Empire of the West a thousand years earlier, brought a series of crises and conflicts which for a long time afterward made impossible any general integration of the Christian society. Since the fourteenth, and especially since the sixteenth century, the Western World has been passing through a protracted stage of competition, discord, and division. In the field of religion the vividly realized and universal fellowship of early Christianity had already been lost under the oppressive and imperialistic system of the papal monarchy. The early church emphasized communion and mutual love and helpfulness; the late mediæval church sacrificed these principles to that of obedience to a potentate who was represented as the vicar of Christ. The Reformation, consciously turning back to recapture the lost positions of the primitive church, again laid emphasis on communion and its social results; but it became tragically involved in the confusion of the time, and was able to realize its ideal only on a national, denominational, or congregational scale. Intenser local solidarity was gained at the expense of a more catholic conception of the unity of the entire church in all the world. Individualism, a product of the Renaissance and of the new economic life of the modern age, entered the field of religion, and fellowship became secondary to private preference or private conscience. Thus the modern period of Christian history has been marked by sectarianism and disruption. From this divided condition and divisive spirit Protestantism is now apparently escaping to enter upon a new era in which the spirit of communion will find religious and social expression, to the remaking of community life.

But before this transformation is effected great tasks are to be done in which not only the leaders of the churches but the leaders of every local community may bear a part. In America the task is in one respect easier than in Europe. It is easier in the sense that all our life is in a more fluid state and group habits are not so definitely fixed. But it is a more complicated task for the reason that religious division has gone farther in this country. In the Old World most communities have felt religion as in some degree a unitive force. Certain of the greater Protestant communions bore a distinct relation to territorial units of considerable extent. The outstanding teachers of Protestantism have always retained a belief in the church universal or catholic, and aimed to promote its reunion, though with little hope of the achievement of such an aim in their own time. In America religion has been rendered more divisive than in Europe through the fact that populations from every part of Europe, and representing every variety of creed, entered freely into all areas. Pioneer conditions also encouraged the formation of new groups. Thus the American community, and especially the typical community of the newer sections of the country, was destined to exhibit the most disrupted condition religiously to be found anywhere in the world.

This condition has not been without its compensations, but it was always unsatisfactory and has come to be recognized as evil by thoughtful leaders who have at heart the interests of Christianity and of the people as a whole. Religious unionism is the most significant movement affecting Protestantism today. The movement has been slowly gathering momentum for a century. The voices raised on behalf of Christian union have continually increased in number and in influence. The experiences of foreign mission comity and coöperation have tended to raise the issue of union in the churches at home. The necessities of the smaller communities at home, in many of which Protestantism is enfeebled because divided, have been calling insistently for bold and confident action leading to the religious unification of village life. In the cities with their religiously dependent areas and enormous social problems, the urge toward union is no less insistent. Impressive union movements have been successfully carried through, and discussion of the possible steps, and negotiation looking toward its achievement, are widespread.

The spirit and temper that make for union are rapidly gaining. Yet up to the present time the effect of the attempts at union upon organization is limited, and Protestantism as a whole remains in a state of multiple division. To the man who looks at it unsympathetically the disintegrated state of Protestantism may appear ridiculous. To one who looks at it sympathetically and from within, the situation is painful, but by no means hopeless. For him it presents a series of problems and tasks which call for earnest thought and action.

There are two kinds of Protestants who hinder the cause of union. There are some who defend the denominational division of Christianity. They will argue, on a superficial view of history, that Protestantism is essentially divisive; they will claim that its present multiple organization makes it efficient to meet the needs of a great variety of religious people; or they may merely irrationally assume that an inherited condition is the best possible and had better be left alone. The first of these arguments runs counter to the ardently advocated principles of the great Reformers; such leaders as Calvin and Cranmer, who, struggling against the divisive trend of the age, proclaimed their faith and membership in the Catholic Church of God, and aimed to restore its visible unity. The second position encourages denominations to maintain distinctions that are non-essential and somewhat artificial in order to avoid disturbance and satisfy a natural inclination to be different from others. The healthy-minded Christian will not want to attach himself to a group that deliberately chooses not to embrace and set forth the whole truth, but merely to make a specialty of some peculiarity of faith or practice to which it persuades itself it is divinely called to bear witness. So the cliques at Corinth, narrowing the Christian heritage and taking denominational names, had to be reminded by the

Apostle: "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas." Does the Christian breathe who would take, let us say, a village or town community united in religion and, in the interests of a wholesome variety, sever it into half a dozen sections, organized in as many variations of polity, worshiping in as many different forms, and reciting as many different statements of belief? The fact is that in a narrow denominationalism variety is lost so far as the individual is concerned; unless, indeed, as nobody thinks of suggesting, he obtains it by moving periodically from one denomination to another. While, on the one hand, variety in the people's religious experience is not to be served by the method of division, that method, on the other, applied in any community, produces a wholly deplorable social disintegration.

When denominationalism is defended on such untenable ground one cannot but wonder whether the defense is not really motivated by a denominational superiority complex for which the other argument is consciously or unconsciously employed as a screen. Our fathers had no hesitancy in affirming the superiority of the denomination to which they gave their special allegiance. Almost nobody makes such an affirmation today; yet preferences and aversions persist. It is useless to denounce these as irrational; they have their basis not in reason, but in emotions which demand satisfaction. It is of course impossible to satisfy the extremist whose religious satisfactions are derived mainly from a sense of membership in a superior group. Nothing but a downright conversion will avail to make him a companionable Christian. But there are many who are open-minded enough to learn an appreciation of the values resident in other groups than their own, and to whom the information which the foregoing chapters contain will come as a happy revelation.

Another of the hinderers is the man who responds with thoughtless alacrity to every suggestion of union, forgetful of the issues involved. It is absurd to expect churches to unite as readily as business corporations merge. Except in rare instances membership in a business corporation is for the individual a mere convenience for the end of making money. Membership in a church is a means of realizing the highest of human fellowships, and is fraught with associations that are not to be lightly dissolved. The fear of the loss of values connected with denominational life holds back many from the support of union projects, and makes of some, fanatical opponents of every such project. If union meant the loss of anything significant for the Christian life of today, these opponents would have a great deal of right on their side. For a unionist to attempt to sweep aside all the sentiment of the denominational conservative as if it counted for nothing, is the surest way to strengthen the opposition and delay progress. The objective of union is an enlarged and enriched communion; and this will be rendered impossible by abrupt and inconsiderate policies. In particular, most of the advantages of unity will be sacrificed if there is not laid at the outset a firm foundation of mutual understanding and appreciation on the part of those participating. Understanding will in itself go far to allay misgiving. And let the ardent refrain from too great impatience of the slow.

In this booklet six important American denominations are introduced to one another. The modesty and cordiality of these introductions is evidence of the spirit that is more and more pervading Protestantism today, and which constitutes its chief hope for the future. Their purpose has been to show the possibility of bringing together into a genuine communion the various elements of active Protestantism. Any process that involves the progressive absorption of weaker by stronger groups would mean loss and decay. It should be recognized that members of any church such as the Lutheran and the Protestant Episcopal, whose genius and constitution have been widely divergent from those of the rest of our Protestant denominations, are unlikely to attach themselves to any united church that will not respect and guard their traditional ideals. A maximum of consideration for the other man's religious habits is essential to unity. To be productive of the best psychological and social results, union must be based upon the recognition and reception on equal and honorable terms of each uniting group by the others and must be accomplished in the spirit that would not waste but conserve the entire living heritage of the past, wherever that inheritance is treasured.

But our interest in the past is largely a product of our still more fundamental concern for the future. This is a concern not for the future of Protestantism merely, but for that of humanity. We believe that the Protestant expression of religion has been significantly profitable to humanity and represents values too precious to the race to be thrown away. It may be too much to say that Protestantism must unite or perish. But the age craves a new social integration, and a divisive Protestantism can have only a negative significance in relation to the progressive forces of the time.

If we continually remember that Christianity is greater than any denomination of Christians, and that the communion of all the saints is more than our own communion, and if we try to understand, as this book will help us to do, the worthy principles for which other groups have stood, and to appropriate their contributions to our own religious life, we shall have put ourselves in an attitude of readiness for service in the advancing movement. Surely nothing is so much needed as a revival of the spirit of unity and religious fellowship. Nothing less than this can afford relief from envious individualism and anarchical selfishness in social living, and bring in an era of social concord, coöperation and good will.

The transformed Protestantism of the future will not be divisive but unitive; it will not be sectarian but catholic. In more favorable circumstances than were afforded in the sixteenth century it will realize the values of communion that were profoundly emphasized in the thought of the Reformers. For them the essential thing about the church was the communion of saints. By the saints they meant all Christian people, and by communion they meant the sacred fellowship of the Christians of all time, participated in by those on earth, and pledged in the Lord's Supper, a fellowship of souls which gave a quality to all the experiences, activities, and associations of daily life. Recovering and reinterpreting valuable elements out of the past, the coming Protestantism will at the same time face forward and address itself to the tasks and conditions of the coming years. It will respect tradition, but it will dare to advance beyond it with confidence. It will grapple with emergent problems in the wisdom of experience but in freedom to avoid the old mistakes. It will blaze new trails for coöperative human endeavor and attain new heights of corporate experience.

APPENDIX A

PRINCIPLES FOR CHURCH ADJUSTMENT

On the basis of investigation and experience we find that a uniform method for the uniting of village churches seems advisable, and are suggesting four simple principles as a guide to those who are contemplating mergers. These principles appear as (A) (B) (C) and (D) on this sheet and were adopted by the Home Missions Council in the meeting at Atlantic City in January, 1930, and will appear in their report as a recommendation to the several denominations of their constituency. These principles have since been approved by the Community Church Workers, U. S. A., and by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Council of Churches in the following resolution:

> While the Federal Council has no authority from its constituent bodies to establish local churches or consolidate those now existing, it is interested, with the Home Missions Council, in the Five-year Program of survey and adjustment now going forward.

In this relationship, the Administrative Committee declares itself in sympathy with the following statement of principles as applicable to villages of one thousand population or less, which has been approved by the Home Missions Council. It is assumed by the Administrative Committee that where a local church is an integral part of a general connectional organization, the procedure of adjustment shall be carried forward in full conference with the official representatives of the communion that is involved:

RESOLVED,—That in the making of church adjustments in communities of 1,000, or less, the following principles should be observed:

A—The primacy of the community interests and the rights and affections of the smaller groups as well as of the larger.

B—That the church should be so formed, and its affairs so conducted, that in all things local it will work towards a single church consciousness, while in its outside affiliations it shall observe such missionary objectives and fellowship interests as continue to enlist the affection of the membership.

C—That it shall show sacred regard for the ceremonies, customs, or sacraments through whch the several groups have been wont to express themselves, making suitable arrangements for their continuance.

D—That its affiliations shall be such, as, on the one hand, will not interfere with the development of a single church consciousness, and a new community ideal, and, on the other, will keep it in touch with the going order of Christendom and in harmony with those ideals and convictions which, through the generations, have become contributions of world-wide value.

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED PLAN FOR VILLAGE CHURCH ADJUSTMENT

As a result of adequate studies of denominationally divided communities made in different states, the following plan of procedure and adjustment is presented as one well adapted to meet the needs of such communities and conserve the necessary strength of the various groups in the United Congregation. It has been successfully adopted, in substance or entire, on a scale wide enough to justify its recommendation.

PRELIMINARY PROCEDURE

On sufficient evidence of unsatisfactory church conditions, and of a desire on the part of the local people to remedy the same, representatives of the community should confer with (a) the Comity Committee of the State Council of Churches or such other interdenominational agency as may exist, and (b) directly or through the Comity Committee, with the several officials of the denominations involved, with a view to submitting to the village constituency a procedure for the formation of a United Church.

ORGANIZATION

As a guide for organization, the following outline constitution is suggested for submission to the several groups concerned in the proposed adjustment: (It is understood that articles and bylaws may be added as required.)

ART. I NAME

This church shall be called the United Church of ....

ART. II

RELATION TO PREVIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The United Church shall, as one body, continue the religious work of the several constituent bodies, seek to minister to the total religious needs of the community, and continue to render such service as has been rendered through the various agencies previously employed.

ART. III MEMBERSHIP

The membership shall consist of those

A. Who are now members of such contract-organizations as may choose to form a section of the United Church and that without breaking connection with the denomination to which they are now attached;

B. Of individuals of any evangelical church who show sympathy with the spirit and purpose of the organization who may enroll according to his or her denominational name;

C. Of those who, from time to time, shall seek admission on profession of faith.

In the admission on profession of faith, permission shall be given to enroll under whatever name desired, or the individual may simply join the United Church.

The form and character of admission by letter shall be in harmony with the usual custom of the Church from which the person comes; in case of individuals joining the church as such, then by that process which is meaningful to the candidate and acceptable to the minister and official board.

Art. IV MINISTER

The minister shall be a regularly ordained clergyman in the denomination from which he comes; said minister shall be expected to continue his association with his own ministerial official group, but in his administration in the church he must show regard for the points of emphasis and the affections of the different members, and thus be constructively true to the spirit of the federation.

ART. V PROPERTY

The properties of the contracting churches shall be submitted to the use of the United Church and shall be kept in repair by the organization under one board of trustees, subject to such limitations as is involved in the legal status. (The matter of transference of ownership of the separate properties is not the question of chief moment in the initial stage of proceedings and should not be a determining factor. If the majority of the people of the community reach a definite, fairly unanimous desire for a United Church, it will doubtless be the purpose of the different headquarters involved to lend harmonious assistance to any property adjustment, subject to the limitations of the legal status involved.)

ART. VI CURRENT EXPENSES

All the general expense, including salaries and care of buildings and other properties, shall be borne by the United Church and that without reference to past ratios.

Art. VII AFFILIATIONS

In all things local, the United Church shall seek to develop a single church consciousness. In its outside affiliations, it shall conserve such missionary objectives as continue to enlist the affections of the membership. The interest of the several agencies previously sustained shall not be allowed to suffer because of the union thus entered into.

Alternate possibilities of affiliations:

A. Connection with the going order of Christendom may be maintained by affiliation with that denomination which is the choice of the majority, and which in turn agrees to accept the responsibility of carrying out all the terms of the federation, extending its direction and advice with equal regard for all the parties involved, or,

B. The United Church may affiliate with a commission appointed by or out of the State Council of Churches, whose duty it shall be to extend on behalf of all the

> bodies involved such attitude of guidance as is extended by any single denominational headquarters. (When such agreement as is suggested in (A) is entered into, it makes little difference which denomination is chosen for affiliation.)

As described under A—(until some State Council action is taken this will be subject in each case to the action of the denominational headquarters involved.)

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